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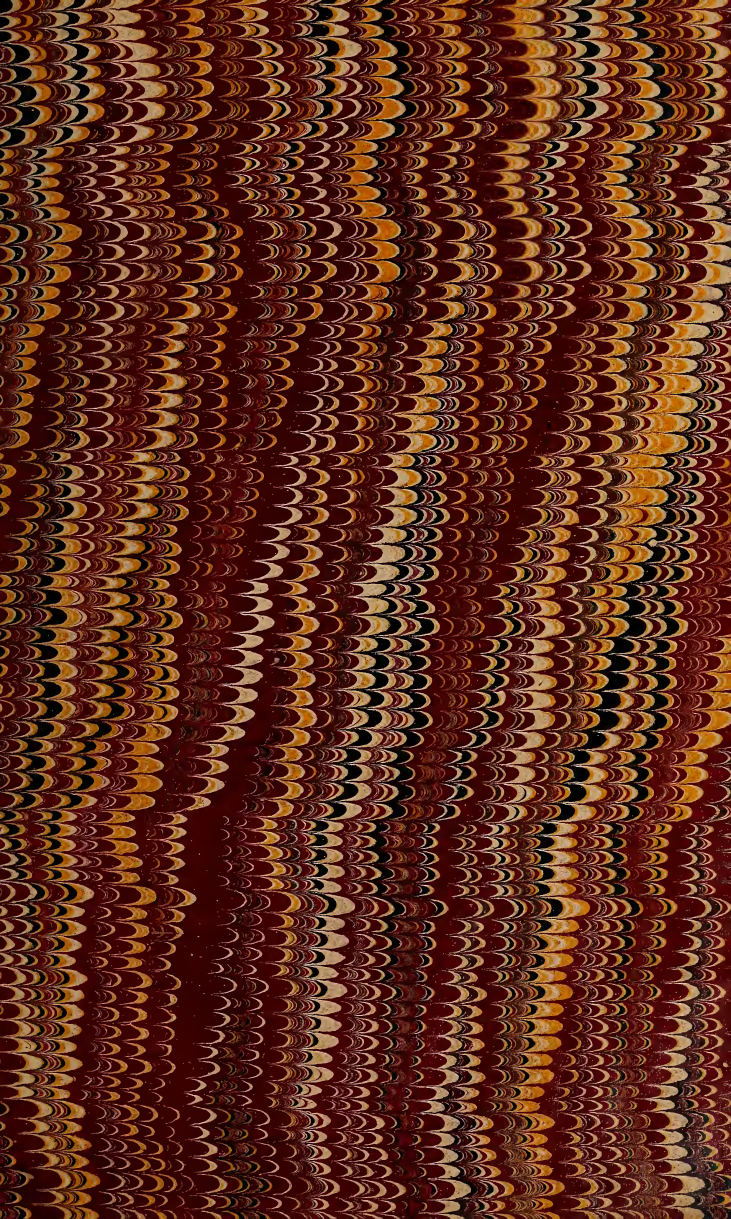

A

CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

RE-OPENING

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING-HOUSE

IN

NEW-ROWLEY,

DECEMBER 6, 1832.

BY ISAAC BRAMAN.

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REV. ISAAC BRAMAN,

Sir,—At a meeting of a respectable number of the members of your Church and Society, held at the Vestry, last evening, the undersigned were appointed a Committee, to express to you the satisfaction with which they heard your Sermon on the 6th instant, and request a copy of the same for the press.

Respectfully yours,

AMOS J. TENNEY,
ASA NELSON,
MOSES CARTER.

New-Rowley, Dec. 8, 1832.

GENTLEMEN,—In compliance with your polite request, the Sermon is at your disposal. Yours respectfully,

I. BRAMAN.

AMOS J. TENNEY, ESQ.
MR. ASA NELSON,
MR. MOSES CARTER.

DISCOURSE.

1 Samuel vii. 12. *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

The Prophet Samuel was a wonderful man. There was something extraordinary in regard to his birth. His mother, Hannah, who had lived some years childless in the marriage state, at length obtained this son in answer to prayer. In connexion with her prayers, she made a solemn vow, that, if the Lord would give her a man-child, she would give the child to the Lord all the days of his life. The good woman meant he should be devoted to God in the service of the tabernacle, while she would endeavor that he should humbly seek the Lord and serve him with fidelity. This vow she performed; and the Lord accepted the gift. Samuel was an instance of early piety; and when very young, supposed to be about twelve years of age, he assisted Eli, the High Priest, in ministering to the Lord. Inspired to predict future events, he was soon known and acknowledged as a true prophet. In addition to all this, he was for many years under God the chief magistrate in Israel, with the title of Judge, but in the stead of a king. His government was exceeding wise and equitable. He did much to suppress wickedness and to promote the piety and welfare of his people.

During the time he officiated as Judge or chief ruler, he witnessed various changes in the state and circumstances of the nation. In all of them he was careful to acknowledge the hand of God, especially in the favorable interpositions of his providence, and the blessings he was pleased to bestow. The people were repeatedly visited with calamity; but, by humility and prayer, obtained deliverance. In the context we have an account of the Philistines invading them; they were alarmed, and besought Sam-

uel to intercede with God in their behalf. He did so, and was heard and accepted. The Lord terrified the enemy with thunder, and his people obtained a glorious victory. This signal manifestation of the divine favor they thankfully acknowledged, and erected a monument to commemorate it. "Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, (or the stone of help) saying, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*"

Like Samuel and his people, it becomes us to recognise the hand of God in all events which are ordered according to his pleasure. The blessings we enjoy, or have experienced, should be acknowledged with ascriptions of gratitude and praise to him from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. Not personal blessings only, such as are granted us individually, but blessings conferred upon the community and the society to which we belong should be thankfully remembered. What has the Lord done for us which should now be mentioned to his praise?

This is an old town, among the earliest settlements of New-England. It was incorporated in the year 1639, almost two hundred years ago, and then included the chief, if not the whole, of Bradford and Boxford. It was settled, I think, in the eastern part of it, sometime before it was denominated a town, and was then called Mr. Rogers' plantation, he being the first minister; and was afterwards called Rowley from respect to him who had come from a town of that name in England. When this part of the town called New Rowley, began to be settled I am not able to say. There was no house, I believe, for public worship till the year 1729. On the 5th day of June of that year, one hundred and three years ago, a house for God was erected a number of rods east of this. Two years after the raising of the house, that is one hundred and one years ago, this Parish was incorporated by the name of the Second Parish in Rowley. Precisely at what time public worship began to be enjoyed here I have not ascertained. Before that, the people were in the habit of going as far as Byfield to hear preaching on the Sabbath. That place was erected into a parish in the year of our Lord 1706, and a minister, the Rev. Mr. Hale, was settled the same year.

Doubtless it would now be thought a great hardship by many to be obliged to travel as far as some of this parish then did to worship God and hear his truth. But in that day the word of God was precious to Christians, the preaching of the true gospel was precious, and they would go many miles, if necessary, to hear

it.* Many that were not Christians in the best sense felt the importance of becoming such; and knowing that faith cometh by hearing, they would make a great effort to go where they could hear the word of life. The goodness and mercy of the Lord will be thankfully acknowledged by all possessing a right spirit, if they can put themselves within the sound of the gospel, though attended with much labor, fatigue, and expense. But the time soon arrived when God would show greater favor to his people in this place, and bring his kingdom near to them, even to their doors. On the 4th day of October, 1732, one hundred years before the 4th of Oct. last, Mr. James Chandler of Andover, being a preacher in this place, this Church was organized, consisting of eighteen male members. The first name on the list is James Chandler, the candidate preacher. The covenant which this new Church adopted was essentially the same as that now in use. "It was read to them by the Rev. Mr. Hale of Byfield while they were all standing together, and they having signified their consent to it by the lifting up of hands, he declared them to be a church of Christ, regularly constituted and founded according to gospel order. The Rev. Mr. Balch of Bradford preached on the occasion, and at the close of the exercises gave out the 133d Psalm, which being sung, the congregation was dismissed with the blessing pronounced upon them. The church tarried in the house of God, after the congregation had gone out, and made arrangements for the Ordination of Mr. Chandler, which had before been determined upon by the parish by a unanimous vote—or as it is stated, every one present voting for it. They agreed to call in the assistance of the neighboring churches of Byfield, Bradford, Boxford, Andover, the first church in Rowley, and the second in Newbury, and likewise the church in Cambridge. All these churches, except that of Cambridge, were present on the eighteenth of the same month, October, and forming themselves into a Council, proceeded to the ordination. The Rev. Mr. Barnard of Andover began with prayer. The Rev. Mr. Rogers preached from John 21st chapter, 15th, 16th and 17th verses. The Rev. Mr. Hale of Byfield gave the Charge. The Rev. Mr. Phillips of Andover gave the Right Hand of Fellowship. The Rev. Mr. Jewett of Rowley made the last prayer. The congregation then sang part of the 132d Psalm and were then dismissed, the blessing being

* There is a tradition of a poor family who lived some ten or twelve miles from Boston, that used occasionally to go that distance to attend the Thursday lecture. Destitute of other means of support, they drove their only cow before them, and fed upon her milk.

pronounced upon them by him whose ordination they were now witnesses to." So says the Record. Soon after the ordination, others, both male and female, were received from neighboring churches. On the 29th day of the same month the church made choice of two of their members to serve as deacons, viz: William Fisk and William Searle, who, it appears, accepted the appointment and continued in the office for a number of years. The former served above thirty-two years; the latter lived about forty-six years after his election, being, if I have not mistaken a figure, in his 88th year at his decease. How long he was able to bear the vessels of the Lord, and to perform the duties of his office, is not known.

The goodness of the Lord was strikingly manifested in the transactions of that day, which were so ordered and conducted as to produce the happiest results; bringing the people to the enjoyment of gospel ordinances among themselves. In all their movements, it should seem, great unanimity and harmony prevailed. But those times were different from these. Men were then generally of one heart and one mind in the great concerns of religion. In this place all were of the same denomination, and there were little or no discordant views in regard to doctrine. The doctrines which were received were substantially the same that are now denominated orthodox; and it was not doubted but they were the doctrines of the gospel, such as Jesus Christ preached, and such as he commissioned his apostles to preach, as showing the only way of life to the guilty children of men. Had any one at that day openly opposed these doctrines, had he denied the divinity of Christ for instance, or indeed any of the doctrines of grace, he would have been considered a monster, more to be shunned than the pestilence that walketh in darkness. This church was founded on Calvinistic principles, as appears by the covenant which has come down to us, and is still adopted by those who make public profession of our holy religion. The venerable Mr. Chandler was a Calvinistic preacher; of which I have satisfactory evidence both from the testimony of aged people who heard him, and from some manuscript sermons of his which I have seen. He believed that all men are by nature children of wrath, and that none can be saved but by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. He believed in the doctrines of the divine decrees and election, of the trinity, of justification by grace, through faith, of the necessity of personal holiness in order to salvation, and of the eternal perdition of all who die in their sins. He might differ somewhat in his

manner of addressing the impenitent from many evangelical preachers of the present day, but of his orthodoxy in regard to the leading doctrines of the gospel, there can be no question. As a man, I am told, he was dignified in his deportment, yet pleasant and affable, strictly exemplary in his life and conversation, highly esteemed by his people generally, and respected abroad.

Mr. Chandler had his trials, however, some grievous ones, and from a source whence they were not to have been expected. Though generally esteemed, there were some in his church, where, if any where, a minister expects to find true and faithful friends, that became disaffected. Without being able to find any fault, if I have been rightly informed, either in his doctrine or character, they complained that he was not sufficiently animated in his preaching, and that they were not interested nor edified.* For such reasons they withdrew from the communion table, causing the church and their pastor much grief and trouble. Ultimately these disaffected persons separated entirely from the church, and others joining them, they worshipped by themselves as they could procure preachers to their liking. Precisely at what time this final separation took place, I am not able to say. As early as 1754 a number withdrew from the communion. At that time, and for a considerable space afterwards, I believe, they did not profess to be of a different denomination from those they left. Indeed there was then scarcely any other denomination in this section of our country. In process of time this body of separatists embraced the sentiments of the Baptists. In the year 1781 an orthodox church was formed among them, and received as a branch of the Baptist church in Haverhill. Four years after, they became a distinct church, and so continue to this day. Such is the origin of the Baptist church and society in this place.

In all the trials of the pastor and church, occasioned by this disaffection and separation of some of the members, *the Lord helped them*, and it is believed dwelt in their midst as their supporter and guide. The church was preserved and built up by occasional additions, and having obtained help of God it continues to this day, and the gates of hell have not prevailed against it. The pastor liv-

* Are there not some at the present day who depend more upon the eloquence and fervor of the preacher than they do upon their own efforts, or even the grace of God, to keep religion alive in their souls? What becomes of the religion of such people in their families and in their closet, when there is no warm hearted preacher to excite and animate them? If the heart be in a right state, divine truth will be precious and cheering, though it be presented in a homely dress and manner. When a person is not pleased and edified by the pure gospel it might be well for him to inquire whether or no there is any fault in himself.

ed to a good old age, and was doubtless an instrument in the hand of God of turning many to righteousness, though, I believe, nothing like a general revival took place in his day. How many made a public profession of their faith during his ministry cannot be fully ascertained, owing to the imperfect manner in which the records were kept in the latter part of his life. There must have been a very considerable number, however, to repair the breaches made by death and otherwise, and to keep the church in existence for so many years. The Rev. Mr. Chandler departed this life April 19th, 1789, aged 83 years, in the 58th year of his ministry. From the best information we can obtain of him there is reason to believe, that in the near view of death he could with a good degree of confidence adopt the language of the apostle, and say, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

For some years before his decease Mr. Chandler was not able to perform much public service, and candidates were employed by the church and society. Hearing different preachers the people soon became divided in sentiment, and sixty four individuals labored here in word and doctrine, for a longer or shorter time, before one was settled. During this time, however, there were several who received an invitation to settle, and in some of them the people were nearly or quite united. Though difference of opinion prevailed, which caused much unpleasant contention, there were none of the libertine sentiments of the present day embraced by any. All were orthodox upon a general scale, and most of the points which divided them are now considered as of rather minor importance. Their being unable for so long a time to obtain the stated ministry of the gospel was a source of anxiety and grief to the friends of religion. Many were ready to fear, God had forsaken them, and that he would never hear and answer their prayers for the blessing they sought. They deprecated the idea of their children being brought up without the usual means of grace. But God had not forsaken his people. They generally enjoyed the preaching of his word till one became stationary among them.

On Nov. 13th, 1796, now thirty six years ago, he whom Providence designed to be your second minister preached his first sermon in this house. The afternoon sermon was addressed to youth, and was blessed to the awakening of one young woman, who obtained a hope, professed religion, and lived to adorn her profession.

The 26th of January following, the church voted to give their candidate a call to settle with them in the work of the gospel ministry. The society having concurred, and an affirmative answer being given, the 7th of June, next succeeding, was appointed for the ordination; which took place accordingly, and that sacred connexion was formed between minister and people, which through the tender mercy of our God has continued to this time. The ordination, it will be perceived, was thirty-five years ago the 7th of June last, and was a little more than eight years after the decease of the former minister.

At that time, there was an unhappy division in the society. In the opposition there were respectable people, who, doubtless, were conscientious in what they did. Some there might be, as is usual in such cases, whose motives were not the best. The prospect was thought to be gloomy by not a few. Some of the council hesitated in regard to the expediency of proceeding to ordination. After the solemn act was performed, it was confidently predicted that the connexion would not continue two years. But He who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and the sovereign disposal of events, has seen fit to order it otherwise, showing us how little we can depend on our own foresight and conjectures in respect to future events. Of the disaffected persons, some left the society and united with other denominations; some removed from the place; a few, it is believed, became sincere friends. The greater part of them are now in the eternal world. The same may be said of those who were active in favor of the settlement. Most of them are gone to reap the rewards of obedient believers, or to experience the awful doom of them that obey not the gospel. Over two hundred and eighty, in all the parish, have died during my ministry among you.

Since the interesting period alluded to, we have had our trials, probably more and greater than those, that have caused repeated separations between minister and people in various places. But divine providence mercifully sustained us under them, the Lord helped us, and carried us through unhurt as to our outward condition; and we may hope, that as to some, they have conduced to the welfare of the soul. It now clearly appears to have been the will of God that we should continue together till this day.

Different sects have risen up among us from time to time. Some of them have had their day and disappeared; thus proving, if Gamaliel may be considered a competent judge, that their counsel was not of God. Be this as it may, our school-house preachers, some

of them, it is thought, have done much to corrupt the principles and morals of our youth and children; but the spirit of the Lord, mercifully lifting up his standard, has greatly counteracted the evil. Whatever discrepancy of religious opinions may have prevailed among the different sects, they seem to have held one sentiment in common, that it was a duty, at least expedient, to make as many proselytes as possible to their own party, regardless of the injury done to others. Accordingly, unwearied efforts have been made, and the most subtle artifices used, to decoy the young and unwary, drawing them from their stated place of worship, on the pretext that they should hear something new and entertaining. By such means, persons of this sort have been led away, too often, it is to be feared, without giving themselves the trouble to inquire whether they should be likely to hear the gospel of Christ, or some other gospel which Christ and his apostles, were they on earth, would not approve. It is a question whether any religious society in New-England was ever more warmly beset on all sides, before and behind, on the right hand and on the left, and by those who made it too evident that they wished her ruin, than this has frequently been. But *hitherto hath the Lord helped us.* The society has withstood all attempts to divide and destroy it. The church has stood like a rock in the sea, firm and unmoved, amid the dashing waves; and if, as we believe, she is built upon a rock, the rock of ages, she will stand, though earth and hell should combine against her.

Both the church and society are larger, and have been more flourishing, of late, than at any former period. The church now consists of about one hundred and thirty members. One hundred and sixty have been received by profession and letter since my settlement with you; almost half of them since the revival of last year. Seventy, including several* that now stand propounded, have made profession within little more than a year, and some have been added from other churches. There are still non-professors among us, who, it is believed, are friends of Christ, and it is hoped, will soon become so valiant for the truth, and be so drawn by love, as to openly and heartily espouse his cause.

For what the Lord has done to sustain and prosper us, as a church and society, we would bless his holy name. That we are wholly dependant on him for the building up of his Zion among us, notwithstanding all the means we may use, there is striking

* These have since been admitted to the church.

evidence in the difference of the results of our two protracted meetings. The preaching and the other services, taken collectively, were doubtless as good at the meeting of this year as at the last; but how different was the effect produced! The last year, nearly or quite a hundred in private professed hope in Christ; the present, one or two. This may seem a mystery to some; but the following Scripture will solve it. "The hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." When God is pleased to bless the word of the preacher, great good is done; but if he withhold his blessing, the most pungent truth is inefficient; all labor and effort will be fruitless. There might be circumstances, however, at the time and after the last meeting, tending to divert the minds of men from the concerns in which all ought to feel the most deeply interested. We are of the earth, earthly, and easily hindered from seeking the welfare of the soul.

The present is somewhat of an important era in our history. I speak in regard to the alteration made in this house of God, and to circumstances connected with it. This house was built in the year 1769, one year before your present minister was born. The dedication sermon was preached by the celebrated Mr. Whitefield. An anecdote of those times should not be omitted here. The building of a new house, at some little distance from the spot where the old one stood, caused considerable excitement and division. Three men, of some property and influence in the society, were so disaffected with the measure that they made a solemn, but certainly a very rash promise, that they would never set their feet within the new house. What they supposed would be thought of their promise in heaven, we have not the means of knowing. But this we do know, the Lord heard it, and, we are told, he ratified it in a most awful, and to them, doubtless, unexpected, manner. Before the house was finished and fit for use, those three men had done with houses made with hands, and with all sublunary things, and were gone where a building with God is indispensable to the happiness of the soul. Vows and promises of this kind do not argue a very high state of pious feeling in those who make them, and had better never be uttered. But to return to this house of God. Since its erection, it has undergone such occasional repairs as were thought needful. Of late it has been deemed advisable, by many, both to repair and to alter the internal structure of the building, supposing it would conduce to convenience and ornament. Others of the society entertained a

different view of the matter, and as we all know, some unpleasant feelings have existed among us. This question it is not my province to decide, nor would it be proper, perhaps, to give an opinion upon it. We need not criminate the motives of either party, or suppose they had any bad design in the affair. It is no wonder that persons should be attached to the form of the house of worship, which they have been accustomed to behold from their childhood. The thing is perfectly natural; and doubtless some sincerely thought, the proposed alteration would be no real improvement, but a needless expense, a waste of time and money, and the cause of much evil. With these views, they could not enter heartily into the cause, nor cheerfully give it a helping hand, as those could, who thought differently upon the subject, and subscribed liberally to promote it. The work is now done, and we are constrained to say, it appears to be neatly, and faithfully done, and is beautiful to the eye.

As an abstract question, we do not hesitate to say, it is a commendable thing to wish and endeavor that the house of God should appear neat and handsome, not to say, elegant. David, though a king, thought with deep regret of his living in a house superior to that which contained the ark of God, and was the place of public worship; and wished to erect a superb building for the service of his Maker. What he desired, his son Solomon accomplished, and built a "house for the Lord that was exceeding magnifical, of fame and glory throughout all countries." Ezra could say "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the King's heart to beautify the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem." There is danger, however, lest we be too much carried away with pomp and show, and forget that God is a spirit, who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. This thought should ever be in mind; that, whatever be the appearance of the place of worship, God is holy, he requires a holy service, and holiness becomes his house forever. May this house be ever holy to the Lord. We pray God here to record his name, here to delight to dwell, here to clothe his priests with salvation, and cause his saints to shout for joy. In this sacred desk, may all his counsel be declared, and no erroneous doctrine ever be suffered to proceed out of the mouth of the speaker. Here, will the Lord ever bless his truth, and cause many to be born again of the incorruptible seed. May all who have labored in repairing and beautifying this house, all who have contributed to the cause, all who wish well to our Zion, seeking her welfare and peace, in fine,

all who shall ever enter this house to worship God and to hear his word, be blessed with the light of his countenance, and the joy of his salvation, and at last be admitted into his glorious house above, where they shall see his face and enjoy his presence forever.

Having thus rapidly gone over the space of a hundred years, and glanced at some of the principal objects that were to be met on the way, considering the various and checkered scenes, which, as a church and people, we have been called to witness, the many supports and consolations in affliction, deliverances from trouble, and the good degree of success which has attended our labors and efforts in ministerial, ecclesiastical, and parochial concerns, and the efficacy which the divine word has had from time to time to convert sinners and purify the saints—seriously considering these things, we are constrained, again and again, to repeat the language of the text, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We know that without his compassionate regard, without his supporting arm, and merciful aid, our church would long ere now have ceased to exist, the society would have been feeble and helpless, if not extinct, and there would have been a famine of the word of the Lord, a famine of the means and ordinances which we now enjoy. Those, who sought to scatter and destroy us, would have prevailed. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us."

By our past experience of his goodness, as well as by his precious promises, we are encouraged still to trust in God, not doubting that he will still be with and bless us, that he will here sustain us in trials, and defend us from evil, that he will here maintain his cause, and build up his church; preparing many sons and daughters for glory. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear. They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Certainly, if the Lord be on our side, we need not fear any spiritual foes. We shall come off conquerors and more than conquerors over them all. But, it should ever be remembered, if we would have the Lord on *our* side, we must be on *his* side. We must be reconciled to God, and seek his glory by obedience to his will in all things. That cannot be a right kind of trust in God, which is unaccompanied with love and holy obedience. Again,

If we would trust in the Lord to do us good, we must try to promote our own good. God works by means, not by miracles; and

if he intends to build us up as a church in the holy faith of the gospel, and to prosper us as a religious society, he will make use of our efforts for this end. Do you ask what we are to do ? I answer, your minister must faithfully declare all the truth in the fear of God, without so much as stopping to inquire whether it will be acceptable to the hearer or not. Doing this, and aiming to act in all things in accordance with the spirit of the gospel, endeavoring to bring sinners to repentance, and to help christians on their journey toward heaven, he might hope for the divine acceptance, and for a blessing on his labors to the good of the people. The church must arise, shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments of salvation. Individual members must arise, trim their lamps, and let their light shine, for the benefit of those who are in darkness, that they may be conducted to the path of life. Let the church do this, and she may hope the Lord will bless and build her up. Sinners must awake, hear the alarming truths of the gospel with self-application, saying each one to him or herself, I am the man, I am the woman, I the youth, I the child. This is the word of the Lord to me, and if I refuse to hear and obey, I refuse at my peril. I have an immortal soul, and that soul, which I have hitherto neglected, and rendered odious to God by my sins, that soul is in jeopardy, it is in danger of being cast off and destroyed forever. I will turn to the strong hold now, while I am a prisoner of hope; I will go to the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, before the door of hope is shut. Those who will do this will secure their own salvation. And if all this people will do it, why then they will all be saved, and the church here will appear all glorious, holding up light to all around her.

There are other duties, which, if we would promote the prosperity of the church and society, must not be neglected. We must take a deep interest in their welfare ; not only such, as the pious and benevolent take in the welfare of the church universal, and of society in general, but such likewise as the dutiful and affectionate child feels for the peace, prosperity, and happiness of his father's house, and of all his dear connexions. True christian benevolence, call it disinterested, or impartial, or by any other name, does not preclude the idea of a special regard for one's own, for the family, church, and society, to which he belongs. We are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. The idea is, we must desire his happiness as we desire our own, we must forbear to injure him in person, name or estate, we must do him good, as we have opportunity, and seek the salvation of his soul. But who ever thought a man is required to look as minutely into

the concerns of another as into his own, or that he is under no greater obligation to his own family, to counsel and instruct them, to provide for them, and to endeavor to promote their interest, than he is to the family of his neighbor ? The apostle condemns the man, who provides not for his own house, as unworthy the christian name, and as even worse than an infidel. So ought we to have special regard for the church and society with which we are connected. We are under obligations to them which we are not under to any other. We ought to know more of their concerns than we can expect to know of the concerns of any other, and to do more for them than we are called to do for those with whom we have no particular connexion. We are to do what we can to prevent discord, and to promote the peace and prosperity of our society. This all its real friends will not fail to do.

One thing we ought specially to observe, that is, not to predict evil to ourselves, not to say, our society is in danger of being broken up, that its foes are many, and its friends disheartened, and we fear our difficulties will not be removed. There is no cause for these fears and dismal forebodings, and no good can come of expressing them. *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*, and if we will trust in him, and do our duty in other things, we believe he will continue to help us, causing us to abide under his shadow, and to share richly in his goodness.

Another thing we shall do well to observe; it is, to do nothing in any way to promote that which we view to be a false religion, a perversion of the gospel of Christ. Certain it is, we cannot understandingly promote a bad cause, and be innocent. We cannot do it without offending God, and exposing ourselves to experience the weight of his just indignation. My brethren and friends, let us all be valiant for the truth, and contend against error of every kind, not with carnal weapons, but with those which are spiritual, and which the great Captain of our salvation has provided, and we may hope for success in our warfare. Let us all devote ourselves to God, to seek his glory, and the interests of the great Redeemer's Kingdom in the world, particularly in the place where he hath appointed the bounds of our habitation. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

Here I might stop; but one word more to my dear people may not be unseasonable or improper. The connexion between us has

continued comparatively long, much longer than has been usual, between ministers and those committed to their charge. It is certainly an extraordinary thing for the ministry of two men to fill a century, or that of one to continue fifty eight years, or even thirty five and more. But so it has pleased God to order things in this place. The various trying scenes through which we have passed, instead of causing a separation, have conduced, it is believed, to bind us more closely together in the bonds of mutual affection. Many have been the tokens of your kind and tender regard for your minister and his family. His many imperfections you have covered with a mantle of love. The Lord reward you an hundred fold now in the present life, and in the world to come grant you life everlasting. The connexion, according to the course of nature, if from no special cause, must very soon be dissolved. The voice that now addresses you will be heard no more. Will you add to all your other kindnesses, your humble, fervent prayers, that the few remaining days of your minister's life may be filled up with fidelity to God, and usefulness to you. Pray God that neither the fear of man, nor any false tenderness for a people dear to his heart, may prevent him from faithfully declaring all the solemn truths of the gospel. There is one consoling thought, should a separation take place, which cannot be far distant, you are, in a human view, in a much better condition to be left than you were several years ago. Then had such an event happened, there would have been reason to tremble for the ark of God in this place. But God has done great things for you; he has increased the number of his people, and strengthened your hands in his cause. It is now confidently hoped, you would not listen to a teacher of error, should such an one come among you, however popular his talents. You know what the gospel is, and can distinguish between the chaff and the wheat. The sheep will follow their true shepherd, for they know his voice, but a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. God grant you may never hearken to any but to him who is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and to such as speak according to his word. The Lord furnish you with a succession of pastors who shall declare all his will, and may his holy truth here be proclaimed, and blessed, as long as the sun and moon shall endure. As to ourselves, may we all so live, serving God and our generation, as to approve ourselves unto him through Jesus Christ, that we may be found on the right of our Judge in the great day, and be bidden welcome to the joy of our Lord.

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